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LYNCH LAW AMONG THE CRIMINALS.

## ROLAND LEIGH; OR, THE STORY OF A CITY ARAB.

CHAPTER XX.—PRISON THOUGHTS AND EXPERIENCES.  
—THE FRIEND OF THE FRIENDLESS.

I WAS in prison, and I was innocent—innocent, I  
No. 271, 1857.

mean, of the crime of which I had been convicted. Was this any comfort to me? I do not think that it was at that time. I am not sure that it was not an aggravation of my punishment. I was very ignorant, and had but little perception of right

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and wrong. I had, it is true, a sort of instinctive impression that "honesty is the best policy," and I had acted upon it, though I do not think I had ever heard the proverb. Probably the solitary lesson I had received, years before, in the matter of the stolen apple, had produced a beneficial effect on my mind; and the frequently reiterated declarations of Peggy Magrath, that she had promised my mother to bring me up honestly, had not been without influence, linked as they were in my memory with my poor mother's impassioned entreaties to the same effect, on the last solemn evening of her life; while Peggy's own experience of the penalties of dishonesty had happily given me an impulse in the right direction. But notwithstanding all this, my mind was in a very misty, confused state in relation to the whole subject; and the trouble into which I found myself so suddenly plunged, thickened the mist, and made confusion more confused.

Honesty wasn't the best policy—so I could not help arguing. The rogue who had possessed himself of my hard earnings and savings, had not only got off undetected, but was walking about unblushingly, and inwardly chuckling over the wicked dexterity by which he had enriched himself and ruined the character and prospects of an unoffending youth; while that youth had been brought down to disgrace and infamy by the very efforts and sacrifices he had made to live soberly, honestly, and industriously! Such was the view which I then took of the mysterious transaction.

I have described my feelings when first confined in the watch-house as those of indifference and carelessness as to the future; but these gave way, after my conviction and removal to prison, to burning indignation, like that which had possessed me the day before, when I saw the gay, glittering, and smiling crowds of idlers in the Park; so that when I was subjected to the proper and necessary regulations of the prison, and afterwards set to work, in pursuance of the sentence passed upon me, so much sullenness was manifested in all my actions and demeanour, that I was looked upon by my gaolers as a hardened and vicious youth, from whom no good was to be expected. Then the society into which I was cast was not likely to produce a healthier state of feeling in my heart. The hard labour to which I was condemned was that of picking oakum, in a large room in the prison, where I found myself surrounded by convicts of all ages, from boys of twelve or fourteen, to heavy-headed sinners of three score years. Not much restraint was, at that time, laid on the verbal communications of prisoners under sentence; for the "silent system" had not then been introduced; and the ribaldry and hardened boastings of the most degrading and detestable crimes, together with the awful blasphemies which polluted my ears, filled even my soul, unsusceptible as it was, with something like disgust. But I forbore to draw back the curtain from this part of my history, and pass on to another subject.

My readers will not have forgotten my poor old acquaintance at the hospital, and the words spoken in season which fell from his lips; and they will naturally have attributed those busy operations of my mind when my bodily senses were buried in sleep, narrated in a previous chapter, as well as

the inward conflict between despondency and resolution, to the influence of those communications. I have abundant reason to thank God that, in his providence, he placed that old man in my way; and I would earnestly entreat every Christian man and woman who has condescended thus far to read my story, to remember and to act upon the divine command and encouragement: "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

Several days passed away in the monotonous occupation of the prison. I did not mind the work; but I did very severely feel the confinement and restrictions of my new home. I have called myself—with what propriety my readers must judge—a "City Arab;" and so far, at least, the designation is correct, that if my hand was not against every man, I was so injured to a free and wandering life that incarceration was intolerably irksome, and I absolutely pined for the liberty of which I had been unjustly deprived. Unjustly! yes, I felt this; and—happily, as I have since believed and now believe—this sense of injustice so filled my soul, that I had not the heart to listen to, much less to join in, those "evil communications" to which I have referred. Sulkily and indignantly I sat, hour after hour, without speaking to my fellow convicts; and when at night I was locked up in my solitary cell, I tried to sleep away, through the remaining hours of day, as well as through the short nights, the remembrance of my wrongs.

And it was here, amidst these apparently unfavourable circumstances, that the little seed which had been sown in my heart began to germinate.

"Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But fear him who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, fear him."

These sentiments started up in my memory one night as I lay tossing on my mattress, striving in vain to close my eyes in sleep. All around me was dark, hard, and unfeeling. It seemed shut out from the world and the world's sympathy and regards; but the thought arose—Perhaps I was not alone; perhaps there was meaning in those words; perhaps it was true, what the old man had told me, that I had a Father and a Friend in heaven who cared for me, though none else did; perhaps he would hear me if I spoke to him; it did not seem to me so very unlikely.

And that story about Jesus Christ and his persecutions and sorrows, which I had heard from little Fanny first, and which had been repeated by my hospital acquaintance—and the reason why He who was rich, became poor—I thought of all this till, instead of trying to go to sleep, I wished and tried to keep awake.

But would God, the God they had talked about—Fanny and the old man, I mean—would he hear me, really hear me, if I were to speak to him?—I—I?

It was a good many years after this that I first read the "Pilgrim's Progress;" and when I came to the description of Christian and Hopeful in Doubting Castle, my thoughts fell back on that particular night in the London Bridewell.

"Now a little before it was day," says Bunyan, "good Christian, as one half amazed, brake out into this passionate speech: 'What a fool,' quoth he, 'am I to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom, called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle.'

"Then," said Hopeful, 'that's good news, good brother; pluck it out of thy bosom and try.'

"Then Christian pulled it out of his bosom and began to try at the dungeon door, whose bolt, as he turned the key, gave back, and the door flew open with ease."

I do not mean to imply that the cases are precisely parallel; for indeed they are, in some particulars, very different—for instance, I was neither Christian nor Hopeful; but in the light which broke in upon my dark mind that night, and the ecstasy of soul which I felt when it occurred to me that if I were to speak to Him—this heavenly Father and Friend, of whom I had heard—he, being so good and so powerful, would help me, I was so far like Christian when he remembered the key Promise. But what had I to tell him, this invisible helper? Well, I could tell him about my being deserted by my wicked father when I was a baby; about my poor mother's troubles; about my grandfather's cruelty; about poor Peggy's misfortune; about how I had tried to get a living, and had succeeded till I met with the accident which introduced me to the hospital; about what the old man had told me there; about—and I remember that my thoughts were very eloquent about this—how I had got into prison through no fault of my own, and wanted to get out again, and couldn't. Could He help me in this matter?

I could tell him, too, that I didn't want to be a rogue; that my mother had begged poor Peggy Magrath to teach me and help me to be honest; that Peggy had performed her promise (her own "parquises" always excepted—but I said nothing about this); that I had tried to be honest; and, if he could, would he help me? Would he?

Reader, I need not tell you that I was very ignorant, very. I had never heard the words, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" I did not know that I had cast my burden upon God—did not know that I had asked good things of him. And when I presently fell asleep, and when I woke in the morning, I did not know who it was that had "put strength into me."

There was a Bible in my cell—that cell in which I was locked up all alone every evening. The cell was not a very cheerful one; but the days were long, for my readers will remember that it was summer time; and for two or three hours after the locking up, some portion of light found its way in through the iron-barred window, high up in the stone wall. Well, the Bible had been shown to me by the turnkey on the first day of my imprisonment; and I was told that I might read it if I liked; but that I was to take care how I used it. I paid no regard to this permission at the time; but on the evening succeeding that of

which I have spoken, I wondered whether I could make out anything that was in the book, and I removed it from the shelf.

It was not much that I could read; but during the short time Fanny had been my teacher, I had advanced a few steps onward; and her lessons, like my mother's, had not been forgotten. In truth, I was surprised by the discovery, not only that I remembered so much, but that I had made sufficient advances to be able to make further progress without external help. I will not prolong this part of my story, however; I will only say that, evening after evening, I sat with the Bible on my knee, spelling out its words, until the light quite faded away; and that I woke in the morning with the earliest dawn to renew my studies; while, as I humbly and gratefully believe, a divine light beamed in upon my soul.

But as yet, I was like the blind man in the first moments of his restoration to sight, who could only "see men as trees walking."

#### CHAPTER XXL

I FALL IN WITH AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE, AND LEARN SOME OF THE CURIOSITIES OF CRIMINAL JURISPRUDENCE.

I HAVE spoken of men of threescore years as being among my fellow-prisoners. There was one in the motley circle whose age must have considerably exceeded this.

I was one day employed at the usual weary prison labour when this man for the first time attracted my attention, and his looks puzzled me. That I had seen him before I felt almost certain, but for some time I tormented my memory in vain by conjuring up past scenes in my history. At last, when I had nearly given up the unprofitable investigation, I thought of the old ballad-singer with whom Peggy Magrath had taken secret counsel. Yes, the prisoner was that ballad-singer.

From the moment of that discovery, I had a motive for my curiosity: perhaps the old man would tell me of my poor lost protectress; and in the course of the day I edged round to his side, and made myself known to him. To my disappointment, however, he could tell me nothing about Peggy, though he had not forgotten his Whiskers' Rents acquaintance; but there is a freemasonry among rogues—and if I wasn't a rogue, I wore the badge and was in the position of one—so we got into conversation.

What had brought me there, he wished to know.

Oh, it didn't matter, I said; for I shrunk from telling him my story, which I knew from experience would not be believed, and would only excite ridicule. I think, too, that since I had told it in all honesty and sincerity to God, I was less concerned what anybody else thought of me. I did not know then that such words as these were to be found in the Bible, "He knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold;" but I felt something like this; and was too light-hearted to mind, so much as I had done, what others thought of me, or what man could do unto me.

"As you like, lad," said the old ballad-singer; "I arn't going to pry into your secrets. I reckon

you be a young hand. You'll get used to it arter a bit.

"Bless your 'art," continued he, when I made no reply; "vy, this 'ere baint nothink, this baint. I've bin in a'most every jug in London, and lots on 'em in the country besides; in e'en a'most every county and sheer in England—York, Stafford, Gloster, Oxford, Harford, Surrey, Kent, Sussex"—he ran on glibly, just as I remembered he had done before in conversation with poor Peggy; and he spoke with a chuckle, and a twinkling of his watery eyes, which told nothing of sorrow or repentance for past misdeeds—"Surrey, Kent, Sussex," he went on; "and you wouldn't guess, now, what they put me in the stone jug at P—for, I reckon."

No, I couldn't, I said.

"'Twasn't murder," said he, in a low, mysterious voice; "but 'twas next akin to it. They called it manslaughter, ha! ha!" and the aged sinner burst into a fit of merriment.

I thought it was nothing to laugh at, if he had taken away human life, even accidentally; and I said so.

"Eh!" said the old man, "but you be a green 'un—what signifies? But you be right, though," he added; "and what I says is, Whatever you does, don't 'ee go to w'ilence. You'll get in the wrong box if ye do."

"You are sorry, then, that you——"

Another explosion of horrible mirth interrupted me. "I never took away no life," said he, when this ceased, "let alone a bit o' poaching o' nights now and then. No, no, I never hort man, 'ooman, or little 'un; and the big wigs knowed it all the while, they did."

"How came they, then, to send you to prison for manslaughter?" I asked.

"It was their soft 'artedness," explained the old man; "they didn't want me to swing for an old pair o' leather tights."

"I don't understand you," said I.

"Fact," said he: "there was a pair o' leathers got into my bag somehow, and I was had up afore the justices to give account on 'em. They said as how I tuck 'em out of a shop, and I couldn't persuade 'em 'twas all a mistake; so they brings me in guilty—that's the jury, mind ye: for 'twas a quarter sessions job. 'Prisoner,' says the 'Beak,' 'you're convicted; and the sentence of the court is that you're to be imprisoned——'"

"Beg pardon—can't do that, your worship," says magistrate's clerk, looking up cunning-like.

"Can't do it!" says the magistrate; "what d'ye mean, mister?"

"Capital offence—more than five shillings vally sworn to—stealing from a shop—sentence, DEATH," says the clerk.

"Eh, indeed! what's to be done? Poor man mustn't hang for a pair of leather——"

"Must," says the clerk.

"Jury must alter the wardiet," says the old justice, looking wery red first, and then wery white.

"Wery good, yer worship," says the clerk; and away the jury goes. Presently they comes back, and axes what they're to do. 'Can't you put in a *not* before the guilty?' whispers the magistrate; but I hears him. The foreman shakes his head.

"Clerk, what is to be done?" says the magistrate again, in a passion. "'Tis you that has got us in this here mess, and you must get us out on't," he says. So the clerk looks up agin, and whispers and whispers; and the magistrate laughs, and whispers to the foreman, and foreman grins and whispers to the jury; and presently they brings in their wardiet agin. Says his worship then: 'Prisoner,' says he, 'the jury has took a marcfil view of your case, and found you guilty of *manslaughter*; and the sentence of the court is, that you be imprisoned for three months.' And so I was."\*

I shall not weary the reader with a detail of the further intercourse I held with this old acquaintance of mine. Happily for me, his conversation did not always, nor indeed often, turn upon roguery. I cannot tell how this was, for I fear the poor old man had been and was a very hardened sinner. Was it that He who once sent his angel to stop the lions' mouths so that they should do his servant no harm, did, out of compassion to my weakness, stop this old sinner's mouth so as to deliver me from further contamination? I have sometimes thought so.

I may even say, that the poor old ballad-singer's communications were, to a certain extent, profitable; for he kept pretty close to me all the rest of his prison time, and gave me so many descriptions—and very faithful ones too, as I afterwards found—of different parts of the country through which he had travelled, that the days seemed shortened and the work lightened. I learned from him, too, what he knew and chose to tell of my mother's home and family: but this was not much; and, in return, I gave him an account of my expedition with Peggy, and the reception we received at my grandfather's hands. I lost my companion, however; for his time expired before mine.

#### CHAPTER XXII.

ANOTHER ACQUAINTANCE, BY WHOM MY CHARACTER IS CLEARED.

TEN weeks had passed away, and I was yet in prison; but I had ceased to brood over my wrongs and harbour revenge in my heart. It had been a blessed imprisonment to me; and my solitary cell had been a Bethel. It was no longer an aggravation of my punishment that I was innocent of the crime laid to my charge; the thought gave me both comfort and hope.

I had yet much to learn, however; I scarcely

\* It is necessary to say that the above ludicrous incident is not a mere fiction of imagination. It was referred to by Sir T. Fowell Buxton, in a speech before the House of Commons in 1831. And as I have spoken elsewhere of the severity as well as the anomalies of the criminal laws at the time of which I write, I shall offer the following explanation. At that time, crimes which are now punishable by a few weeks' or months' imprisonment, were expiated only by DEATH. For stealing from the person to the value of twelve-pence, the sentence of the law was DEATH. For robbing a shop to the extent of five shillings, it was DEATH. For stealing from a dwelling-house to the value of forty shillings, was DEATH.

It is no matter of surprise that this undue and unchristian severity constantly defeated itself and perverted the exercise of justice and of mercy. Numberless crimes were suffered to go unpunished rather than subject the criminal to the penalty which hung over him; and when prosecutions took place, the crooked ingenuity of prosecutors, witnesses, counsel, judges, and juries, was perpetually exercised in defeating the operation of the law.



could have told the cause of this alteration in my feelings; I only knew that, day after day, I hailed the time of my seclusion in the cold cheerless cell, that I might talk to my Father in heaven, and ask his help, and spell out some words of comfort in the Bible. And thus—but I will not dwell on this.

Ten weeks, then, had passed away, when one morning, among a batch of new arrivals, I observed the very man to whom I owed my unjust punishment—Tom Smithers. In spite of his prison garb, I knew him at once; and he was not long in singling me out from the rest of the oakum pickers. He came up to me, and, with a boisterous laugh and coarse joke, clapped me on the back; but my indignation was roused, and I turned away.

"What! too proud to own an old acquaintance in trouble?" said he; and then in a lower tone he added, "I say, what about the one, five, four? eh, my chick?"

Still I did not answer; and but for Smithers himself, who seemed to think the affair too good a joke to be buried in oblivion, his former treachery might have remained undetected; but before the day was over, it was known among the prisoners.

There is said to be "honour among thieves;" and Tom Smithers soon found that he had been injudiciously free in his communications. In the half-hour allowed for walking in the prison yard before locking up at night, a mock tribunal was formed, and a mock trial performed, in which the confessions or boastings of the man were brought forward against him, and in which I also was compelled to give evidence. The result was conclusive; and the culprit was solemnly sentenced to be pumped upon. The joke was too good and practical to be forborne; so poor Smithers was dragged to the pump, and had undergone the operation before the turnkeys could interfere to rescue him from the hands of his laughing prosecutors, who, to save themselves from extra labour and closer confinement, pleaded the unfortunate man's own disclosures of his past treachery.

Two days after this, I was conducted to a room in the prison where, to my surprise, I found myself in the presence of the justice who had sent me to hard labour and confinement, and confronted by my former accuser, who, as it seemed, having a wholesome dread of a repetition of the discipline of the pump, had been induced to repeat his confession to the governor of the prison, by whom it had been conveyed to the justice himself.

I was interrogated, and repeated my story. It was astonishing how much more natural and coherent it seemed, now that it was urged against a man convicted of another crime, than when it was pleaded in my defence against an apparently credible and respectable accuser.

"How much longer has this young prisoner to stop here?" asked the justice of the head gaoler.

"About three weeks," he was told.

"Um! well: it isn't worth while to make a do-do about this little mistake for the sake of three weeks—getting out a pardon, and all that sort of thing. Harkye, young man, I dare say you have not been very uncomfortable here, have you?"

"No sir; but——"

"Ah, well then, a week or two won't make any difference," said he, interrupting me. "You can grant him any little indulgences, you know, Mr. R——; and—ah, it will be a good lesson to you, young man, not to get into bad company another time. You seem to be a decent sort of a lad, and with your talents, you know——"

"Shall I get my money again, sir?" I asked, when I found that the gentleman stopped short in his address.

"I should think not," said he, slowly and gravely; "you might sue the fellow, to be sure, but he is not worth powder and shot, I am afraid; and I can assure you that, in such cases, the first loss is the least."

And that was all the reparation I obtained for my false imprisonment. I was not liberated a day sooner,\* nor did I receive back a penny of my lost money; neither was my character much mended by the late discovery of my innocence. But I had gained experience, I was told when I left the prison—yes, I had gained experience. Ah! I had gained something more than that; and I lived to bless God that I was sent to prison unjustly.

#### A VISIT TO SOME LEAD AND SILVER MINES IN FRANCE.

AFTER witnessing the opening of the Exposition of Industry in Paris in May, 1855, we availed ourselves of an offer which was made to us to inspect some interesting mines at a distance from the capital. The Paris Directors kindly furnished us with letters of introduction to the resident managers of the works, while the best accommodation that the village offered was retained for us. We travelled by the most luxurious of railways to within fifteen miles of our destination, where we procured an open carriage with which to accomplish the remainder of our journey. It was the end of May, and though in a latitude six degrees south of Devonshire, the trees, we found to our surprise, had scarcely budded. The cold was piercing, and a bitter storm of hail assailed us on the high ground we had to pass over, so that we arrived half frozen at the Hôtel de la Poste. What traveller does not at once recognise the head hotel in a French village? A double flight of steps, guarded by iron rails, conducted sideways into the large lofty room where the landlady sat, and where peasants were smoking, and drinking their weak wine. From thence we passed into a stone passage, garnished with pails and dairy utensils, and apparently used as a subsidiary kitchen. Thence, a flight of stone stairs led to a long wooden passage, through which dogs roamed unregarded; on emerging from which, we found ourselves ushered into the grand apartment of the Hôtel de la Poste—a large carpeted room with two beds, sundry easy chairs, and a wood fire

\* It is not many months ago that I saw, in a police report, an account of a poor female prisoner, who during her imprisonment was proved innocent of the charge on which she was convicted; but who, as in my case, was told that, as her term had nearly expired, it was scarcely worth while to revoke the sentence. The only difference in her case was that the remaining term of imprisonment was days—not weeks. Other cases, too, of a still more painful character, have more recently been brought before the public.

blazing on the brick hearth. The room was well furnished, with paper artificial flowers under glass shades; but the whole washing apparatus was comprised in one gold-rimmed basin and a stoppered decanter, standing on a marble console between the aforesaid artificial flowers. This room, evidently the glory of the village, Madame took care to tell us had been designed and furnished under the direction of one of the French Directors, and for their special accommodation while visiting the mines.

M. B.—the gentleman who was to act as our cicerone—being announced, we armed ourselves with mackintoshes and umbrellas, and started off to visit the smelting works, which were in the village. My husband had warned me to bring books and tracts for the English operatives and their families employed in the mines, but in the smelting works we saw few except French workmen. The works were of the usual sort, quite incomprehensible to ladies—great barn-like buildings, a steam-engine, furnaces, melting of metal, and a foundry for repairing machinery and tools.

After dinner, on beginning to explore the nearest hills, we were soon hailed by some boys in unmistakable English:—"Sir, M. B. is looking for you, and is gone out yonder."

Our informants had pursued us for half a mile, delighted apparently with a pretext for making our acquaintance; for, almost unquestioned, they told us they were English boys—had been two years in France—did not know much French, but were learning Latin from their minister, who lived opposite the hotel we were staying at. We found that the intelligence of the arrival of an English family had spread through the village, and that the poor women were as anxious to see us as if they had been three years at sea.

Our arrangements for the following day were soon made. My husband, with M. B., Captain R., the oldest captain of mines, and some of his sons, who were called underground captains, were to start at seven on a visit to the more distant mines. It was a scrambling journey, partly on foot, and partly in a rough vehicle over still rougher roads, which were thought to be unfit for ladies; and when we were subsequently shaken over the roads that were thought fit for us, I quite acquiesced in the opinion.

After breakfast, we wandered up to the church, and to the ruins of the castle of the Counts of P—, under whose descendants the Company hold the property. On returning, our course was arrested by friendly salutations.

"Good morning, Ma'am; are you the English ladies that have come to P—?"

"Yes; but how did you know it?"

"Oh, my little boy came running home to tell his mother last night. Pray come and see my wife; she has been here two years, and will be so exceedingly pleased to see any one from England."

After sundry questions as to the English workmen, the gentleman who thus greeted us told us his name was Stokes, a Cumberland man, and an engineer; he further stated that they had a minister, who also acted as schoolmaster, and a comfortable chapel. We inquired as to the observance of Sunday.

"Oh," said he, "we made a bargain about that; not one of the English hands will go nigh the works on a Sunday; nor is this all, for the Frenchmen naturally ask, why they should work when the others rest; and I do not believe that they would work now if they were asked. Indeed," he continued, "so far as I am concerned, I had given up an employment in London on that very account, and before I would have anything to do with P—, I went to Mr. —" (naming one of the English Directors) "and told him so. Mr. — said he feared the furnaces were so constructed that they could not be blown out on Saturdays. 'Then,' said I, 'unless I have liberty to pull them down and rebuild them, so that they can be stopped, I am not your man.' I got leave to do so; and, would you believe it, we found such a mass of silver lodged in the furnaces, as entirely to repay the expense of rebuilding them."

Stokes further told us that they had no annoyance from their Romish neighbours; while they of course were careful to give as little umbrage as possible to the authorities, in return for the full protection afforded them. They did not encourage the attendance of the inhabitants, who, not understanding the language, only came to hear the organ and the singing, and annoyed the congregation by their national habit of walking in and out during divine service. The workmen seemed all to be Methodists; but, surrounded as they are by an ocean of Popery, the inhabitants of this little Protestant island had learned to be indifferent about the minor points on which Protestants differ. Their minister had been introduced to them by an English clergyman, well known to all Protestant churches in France and Italy, who, incapacitated by ill health for labouring at home, employs his remaining strength in aiding every struggling Protestant interest abroad.

Our friend Stokes informed us that the class-leaders in this little religious community had held several discussions with the priests, but the want of a common language had rendered the interviews of very little use. It was satisfactory to observe that these workmen, so exemplary for their consistent piety, had at the same time been selected by a commercial company on account of their superior skill, intelligence, and general good conduct.

We found the women less contented and happy than the men. They complained of their isolation, and still more bitterly of the dirt by which they were environed and polluted—a well-founded grievance, for the state of the roads and lanes reminded us of walking through a farm-yard; and Captain R. said that the condition of the village in a morning was utterly disgusting, from the entire absence of any proper sanitary arrangements among the inhabitants.

The new company by which the mines are leased has been in existence only a few years. The old company seemed to fulfil the functions usually assigned to Oliver Cromwell in an English cathedral, all mischief and deficiency being laid to its charge. The new company thought it incumbent on them to provide for the safety and moral habits of the hundreds of young women who worked for them, at what we should regard as most unfeminine employments. Part of their

tasks consists in wheeling the ore (earth) in barrows, mixing it with water like mortar, and pushing the mass along troughs with their spades. They all wore their clean white caps, dark blue woollen jackets and petticoats, and were chiefly barefoot. Their clothes were well tucked up, and they really were very clean, considering the nature of their employment. I was glad to see that the size of their barrows and spades were proportioned to their strength. Formerly, these girls had been left to shift for themselves. Those who live within three miles of the place of labour walk thither night and morning, knitting as they go. Those who come from a greater distance are housed in a building something humbler than an ordinary workhouse, where, for a sum barely remunerative, they are provided with clean lodging and a basin of soup daily, the company feeling that they have no right to make any profit in the transaction. A matron is engaged to overlook them. On the whole, we were much gratified by our visit; and after tendering our best thanks to the friends who had contributed so cheerfully to our pleasure and instruction, we returned to Paris, heartily wishing all honour and success to the "Anonymous Company of the Lead and Silver Mines of P—."

#### THE EARLY LIFE AND STRUGGLES OF HUGH MILLER.

THERE is, perhaps, scarcely one individual among the numerous readers of this journal who is not already aware of the tragical fate that has recently befallen the eminent man whose name stands at the head of this sketch. One of the sturdiest intellects, apparently, of our times, overtaxed by its toils, has been overthrown and wrecked. Science has lost one of her foremost and favourite sons, literature an honourable votary, and religion a distinguished champion. A career, marked by valiant strivings, splendid achievements, and growing usefulness, has ended in a catastrophe so terrible, that thousands of hearts have been pierced with anguish at the tidings. It is sad indeed that a life so consecrated to the noblest purposes and pursuits, should have had so mysterious and unmeet a termination. Yet even this death, harrowing as are the circumstances by which it has been invested, was incurred in the service of God and the vindication of revealed truth. The ink with which he had completed his last scientific legacy to the world was scarcely dry, before the long overwrought mind gave way, and passed within the encircling folds of that awful cloud of darkness and agony in which it finally disappeared from among the lights of earth, to emerge, as we believe, through that divine grace to which it was no stranger, among the brighter, serener, and more enduring lights of heaven! While such a departure from this terrestrial scene brings a message of more than usual impressiveness to all thoughtful men, the story of Mr. Miller's life, and particularly of his early struggles, will be found full of suggestion and instruction to every class of our readers. The details and incidents of a career, begun as a lonely boy on the bleak coast

of the far north, pursued for many years as a working stone-mason, and concluded as one of the ablest newspaper editors of which our country can boast, and with a scientific reputation of the highest order, cannot be otherwise than deeply interesting and attractive. Happily the process by which he "achieved his greatness" is most entertainingly related in a work from his own pen, entitled, "My Schools and Schoolmasters," of many of the facts embodied in which we shall avail ourselves. To all aspiring working men, this mirror of a worthy life would prove a precious literary treasure.

About forty-two years ago, a wild and determined-looking boy, of some twelve years of age, might have been seen, on summer evenings or during the afternoons set apart for school holidays, wandering among the rocks and pebble beds of the coast of Cromarty, in the north of Scotland. By any one who had the curiosity to watch his movements, he would have been seen to pause ever and anon, and drawing forth an antique-looking hammer, with a handle of strong black oak, which had descended from a buccaneering ancestor, commence vigorously smiting some fragments of rock that seemed likely to yield mineral treasures. Having secured a specimen more than ordinarily curious and interesting, he would bear it home in triumph, and exhibit it to his friends. One day, while thus employed, he found concealed in some large-grained granite a few sheets of beautiful black mica, which, when split quite thin, and pasted between slips of mica of the ordinary kind, made admirably coloured eye-glasses, that converted the landscape around into richly-toned drawings in sepia, and afforded great amusement to himself and his young companions. At another time, he discovered numerous crystals of garnet embedded in mica-schist, which in his eyes were identical with the precious stones set in his mother's gold brooch—an opinion which, though not shared by the neighbours to whom they were exultingly shown, was ratified by his uncle Sandy, a man of enlightened mind and considerable information. After a heavy surf had beaten the exposed face of the neighbouring hills, there would often be found large patches of comminuted garnet, resembling pieces of crimson carpeting, or sheets of crimson bead-work, of which almost every point and particle was a gem; and flinging himself down on the beach, beside these sparkling treasures, the delighted boy turned them over with his fingers, dwelling upon them in rapture.

On another occasion the young explorer made a discovery of considerable value to geologists. Venturing one day into the woods which clothed a hill at a short distance from Cromarty, he came to a black, miry ravine, of small extent, protruding from the swampy sides of which were the decaying remains of huge giants of the vegetable world that have now no living survivors in the district. Prostrate and perished oaks were there, of enormous girth, into whose coal-black substance one could dig as easily with a pickaxe as one digs into a bank of clay. Handfuls of hazel-nuts, cups of acorns, twigs and leaves, all black as jet, that had fallen centuries before, were taken from this singular morass. But the greatest curiosity

recovered from this dark grave of the past was an immense fragment of an extraordinary-looking deer's horn. The trophy was taken home with no little delight, and submitted to uncle James, the antiquary of the family. This learned authority at once paused in his work, and after surveying it leisurely for some time, said: "This is the horn, boy, of no deer that now lives in this country. We have the red deer, and the fallow deer, and the roe; and none of them have horns at all like this. I never saw an elk; but I am pretty sure this broad, plank-like horn can be none other than the horn of an elk." Other marvels, disinterred from the same spot, were subsequently added to the huge antler. A relative from the south some time afterwards taking a strong fancy to them, they were bartered away for a magnificent box of paints, and ultimately found their way into the museum of some London virtuoso.

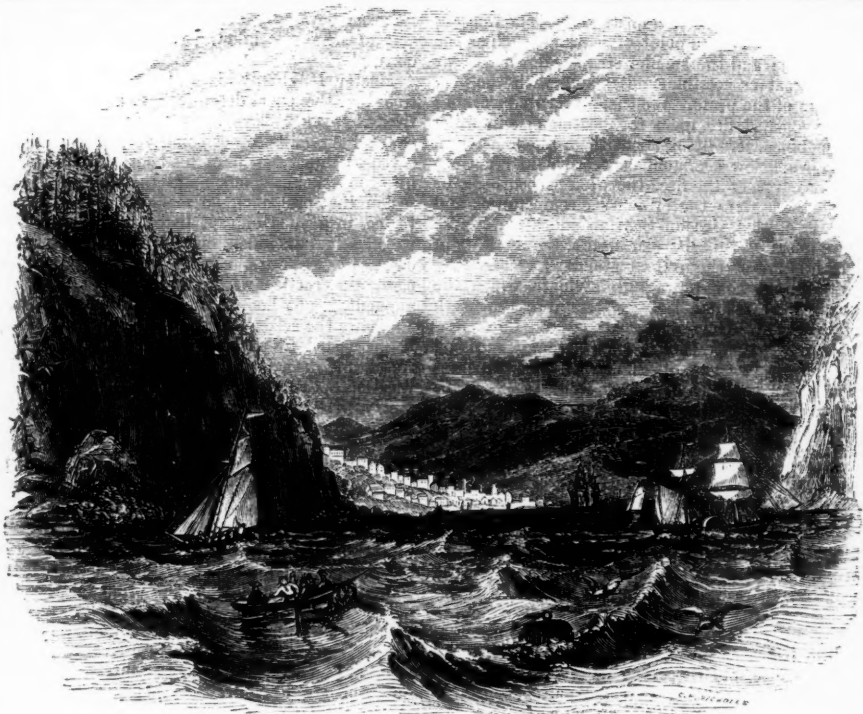
The remarkable boy thus introduced to our notice, whose early recreations were so rational, and whose very sports partook of a scientific tendency, we need scarcely say, was Hugh Miller. At this period his father had been dead several years. He had been one of the best sailors among that proverbially hardy and adventurous race, whose lives are spent amidst the buffetings and perils of the northern seas and friths. He went down one awfully tempestuous night at the entrance of the Cromarty harbour. His sloop had been seen on the previous evening tacking about in the open sea, and the remark was hazarded by one who had anxiously watched the skilful manœuvring of the distressed vessel, "Miller's seamanship has saved him once more;" but when the sullen morning broke, the hapless sloop floated no longer. It had foundered within sight of the home of its master.

A dreary season followed this calamity, which clouded the earlier years of the eldest born, and made him long familiar with hardship and privation. Relatives, however, afforded to the struggling widow such solace and assistance as it was in their power to render. Previous to his father's death, Hugh had been sent to a dame's school, where he was duly initiated into the mysteries of reading and spelling. The art once acquired, he found it a *sesame* to perpetual delights. The ability to read gave him access to stories which never ceased to charm him. On the dismissal of the school he would retire into a secluded corner, and there con over the romantic history of Joseph. The appetite once excited, could only be appeased by fresh narratives; accordingly, he read on and on with growing interest and wonder—the story of Samson and the Philistines, of David and Goliath, of the exploits of Elijah and Elisha; and after these, the New Testament parables and histories. Nor was his taste confined to sacred topics. Assisted by his uncles, he began to collect a juvenile library in a box of birch-bark, in which he treasured up "Jack the Giant Killer," and other foolish works of a similar character—for in those times the youthful mind had not the same sources of healthful gratification as in the present day. From such questionable aliment as these works afforded, he passed on, unconscious at the time of the broad line of distinction between them, to the fascinating adventures and gorgeous scenery of

the "Pilgrim's Progress"—a book of which it has been well said, that it is as interesting to the child as to the saint. Old Homer next, by the aid of Pope's translation, peopled his young brain with the stirring incidents, the bustling heroes, and vivid picturings of his immortal pages. A little library, too, had fallen to his heirship, consisting of a miscellaneous collection of books made by his father. Many of the works were imperfect, the missing volumes having been aboard with their owner when he perished. Here he found numerous voyages, travels, and adventures, the perusal of which thoroughly roused the embryo powers of Hugh's mind, and sharpened his natural inquisitiveness. Besides these popular and captivating subjects, there were volumes, too, of sound theology and stiff controversy, with which he did not venture to grapple till his mind had attained greater maturity and strength.

The loss of his father was, to a considerable extent, supplied by the kindness and watchful care of his two uncles; one of whom, we believe, still survives, to rejoice in the splendid achievements of his illustrious nephew, and to bewail with no common sorrow his untimely end. His elder uncle, James, was a harness-maker by trade, and wrought for an extensive district of country. He was a keen local antiquary, and was brimful of traditional lore. Some of these wild stories, as caught from his lips, were committed to writing, and published by his nephew at the outset of his literary career. During the long winter evenings, a circle of relatives and neighbours were wont to gather round the industrious tradesman, when one of the number would read aloud from some interesting volume for the general benefit, out of which a pleasant and profitable conversation would frequently issue. At these gatherings young Hugh was often present, and he speaks in his autobiography of the happy influence which such opportunities of improvement exercised over his boyhood and youth. His other uncle, Alexander, or Sandy, as he was familiarly called, was of a different cast from his brother. Whilst James was somewhat of a humourist, Alexander was grave and serious, and was never but once known to perpetrate a joke. A cart-wright by trade, he had been infected by the martial enthusiasm which was kindled by the outburst of the first French revolution, and entered the navy; and during the eventful period which intervened between the commencement of the war and the peace of 1802, there was little either suffered or achieved by his countrymen in which he had not a share. He had served and fought under Nelson, and Duncan, and Keith, and was one of the men who had been drafted out of the fleet to supply the lack of artillerymen in the Egyptian army under Abercrombie. Yet, although he had been distinguished for his personal bravery and brilliant performances, such was his innate modesty of character, as well as his disgust of war and bloodshed, that he could seldom be prevailed on to narrate his exploits. He would tell what he had *seen*—not what he had *done*. From his graphic descriptions of foreign scenery, customs, plants, and animals, the thirsting mind of his youthful auditor gained a large accession of valuable ideas. Nor was the instruction imparted by the uncles limited to secular





VIEW OF CROMARTY, THE BIRTHPLACE OF HUGH MILLER.

topics; for it is recorded to their honour that, on Sabbath evenings, they were accustomed to assemble Hugh, in company with his sisters and two cousins, to be catechised and examined on religious subjects. On these occasions they attempted, with gentle earnestness, to sow that seed of divine truth which might spring up and yield a holy increase in future years—a labour of love that has not been without its reward.

A consciousness of his nationality, and the first glow of patriotic enthusiasm, were aroused in the bosom of the subject of our sketch in the tenth year of his age. This effect was wrought by a perusal of the lives of Wallace and of Bruce—the great hero-guardian and the hero-king of Scottish history. His susceptible imagination was intoxicated especially with the fiery narratives of the blind minstrel who had celebrated the exploits of the former, and the impression made at this early period was never lost.

From the dame's school he was transferred to the grammar school of the parish, then consisting of about 120 boys, besides a class of about thirty girls. The school was situated near the seashore, and is pictured to us as a low, long, straw-thatched cottage, open from gable to gable, with a mud floor below, and an unlathed roof above; while stretching along the naked rafters, which, when the master happened to be absent for a few minutes, gave noble exercise in climbing, there used frequently to lie a helm, or oar, or boathook, or even a foresail—the spoil of some hapless peat-

boat from the opposite side of the frith. To account for the exhibition of these marine trophies in a building devoted to education, it is necessary to explain to the reader, that it had been a custom, dating very far back, for all Ross-shire boats employed in the peat trade to contribute twenty peats out of every cargo to the grammar school. Not unfrequently an attempt was made to evade the payment. When such refusal took place, a party of boys was commissioned by the master to exact the perquisite; or, in lieu thereof, to secure in behalf of the institution some spar, or sail, or piece of rigging, which, until redeemed by special treaty and the surrender of the peats, was stowed away over the rafters. These peat expeditions, Mr. Miller tells us, were intensely popular—an assertion which we can readily believe. "It was always a great matter," he says, "to see, just as the school met, some observant boy appear, cap in hand, before the master, and intimate the fact of an arrival at the shore by the simple words, 'Peat-boat, sir.' The master would then proceed to name a party, more or less numerous, according to the exigency; but it seemed to be a matter of pretty exact calculation that, in the cases in which the peat claim was disputed, it required about twenty boys to bring home the twenty peats, or, lacking these, the compensatory sail or spar. There were certain ill-conditioned boatmen who almost always resisted. In dealing with these recusants, we used ordinarily to divide our forces into two bodies; the larger portion of the

party filling their pockets with stones, and ranging themselves on some point of vantage, such as the pier-head; and the smaller stealing down as near to the boat as possible, and mixing with the purchasers of the peats. We then, after due warning given, opened fire upon the boatmen; and when the pebbles were flying about them like hailstones, the boys below commonly succeeded in securing, under cover of the fire, the desired boathook or oar. Such were the ordinary circumstances and details of this piece of Spartan education." We have narrated this singular usage, the morality of which is not of the highest standard, as affording us a glimpse of the rough style in which the young were trained forty years ago in the north of Scotland. How any studies could be advantageously pursued under such circumstances of excitement, we cannot conceive. The preservation of an efficient discipline would seem to be impossible in a school perpetually agitated by the anticipation, the execution, or the discussion of the incidents attending such forays.

But this was by no means the only source of distraction to brave Hugh and his scholastic comrades. As the school windows fronted the frith, no vessel could enter the harbour without attracting the attention of the lads; and, eagerly improving such opportunities of studying nautical matters, there was, Mr. Miller thinks, scarcely another educational institution in the kingdom in which all sorts of vessels, from the fishing yawl to the frigate, could be more correctly sketched on the slate, or where any defect in delineation was so sure of being detected and unsparingly criticised. Further, the town, which then drove a great trade in salted pork, had a slaughter-place not thirty yards from the school door, where from eighty to one hundred pigs used sometimes to die for the public good in a single day. The cries of death filling the neighbourhood were not likely to predispose the pupils to any close application to their dry grammars and puzzling sums. During the herring season, too, all the boats used to pass the school windows on their way to the harbour, which provoked guesses and discussions as to the quantity aboard, from the depth to which the boats were seen to be sunk in the water. Sometimes, when the curing yards were too small to accommodate the immense quantities caught, the fish used to be spread in glittering heaps opposite the school-house door; and an exciting scene, combining the bustle of the workshop with the confusion of a crowded fair, would spring up under the very eyes of the scholars. They had many of them only just to lift their eyes from their slates or their copy-books, to witness all the operations of curing, packing, and despatching myriads of herring. Truly, the animal said to have been so divided in his thoughts and inclinations between two stacks of provender, could not have experienced greater perplexity than that which troubled young Hugh and his schoolfellows when thus unfortunately placed between these antagonistic modes of instruction. Inclination would powerfully prompt them to prefer the external and the exciting, while duty would sternly bid them to close their eyes and ears to the outer world, and immerse their minds in lexicons, and fractions, and mysterious moods and tenses. Surely

few poor boys have ever been doomed to the pursuit of scholastic knowledge under greater difficulties!

Master Hugh, by his own confession, was not free from the usual deceptions so commonly practised by school-boys upon their master. The tutorial surveillance not being very strict, he ventured to import some of his books of amusement into the school, which, amid the Babel-like confusion that prevailed, he managed to read undetected to groups of rapt listeners. Other boys, we ourselves included, have done the same in our day; but we must caution our young readers against a practice, which, however pleasant at the moment, is not honourable towards their teacher, and sows the seeds of idle habits. From reading, he proceeded to the relation of what he had perused and heard at home; and his story-telling vocation once ascertained, the faculty was kept in pretty lively exercise. His popularity among his fellows was established. Having at length exhausted all his father's adventures, the wonderful incidents in the life of Uncle Sandy, as well as the romantic passages he had read in books—and the demands of his class-mates continuing as insatiable as ever—he was compelled to extemporise biographies, and improvise thrilling tales, which were received with immense *éclat*. The master, all this time, had a tolerably correct notion of what was going on in the "heavy class," as it was termed; but, being an easy, good-natured man, he spared the rod. Somehow, this youthful rival to his legitimate influence and authority contrived to secure his respect and favour. He had an intuitive perception that the boy possessed talents above the average; and would sometimes, when the class was engaged on a general English lesson, address to Hugh personally little quiet speeches, vouchsafed to no other pupil, indicative of a certain literary ground common to both. Of this we have the following illustration:—"That, sir," said the master, after the perusal of a sketch from the 'Tatler,' or the 'Spectator'—"that, sir, is a good paper; it's an Addison;" or, "That's one of Sterne's, sir;" and on finding in Hugh's copy-book, on one occasion, a page filled with rhymes, which he had entitled "Poem on Care," he took it to his desk, and, after reading it carefully over, called the writer up, and with his closed penknife as a pointer in one hand, and the copy-book brought down to the level of Hugh's eyes in the other, began his criticisms. "That's bad grammar, sir," he said, resting the knife-handle on one of the lines; "and here's an ill-spelt word; and there's another; and you have not at all attended to the punctuation; but the general sense of the piece is good—very good indeed, sir." And then he added, with a grin smile, "Care, sir, is, I dare say, as you remark, a very bad thing; but you may safely bestow a little more of it on your spelling and your grammar."

Though thus recognised as a kind of leader in all light intellectual pursuits and manful exercises, we are glad to know that he resolutely set his face against every practice involving cruelty and barbarity; and such relics of a semi-savage state of society were far from rare in his early days. The Cromarty school, for instance, had its annual cock-fight, preceded by holidays, which

were spent in training the poor birds destined to suffer in the encounters of the sanguinary pit. Every pupil was compelled to subscribe towards the fund, although he was excused from bringing any birds. Hugh availed himself of this exemption, and kept aloof from these brutal and degrading exhibitions. Far more congenial was it to his tastes to wander at low water along the sea-beach, sometimes alone, but more frequently in the company of Uncle Sandy—a professor of natural history without the name—when the boy's mind was feasted with facts and anecdotes concerning the various productions of the sea which happened to be cast in their way. Sometimes a lobster would be caught in his hole, and, while still in the grasp of the captor, it would astonish him by suddenly, after emitting a crackling sound, leaping out of his hand, leaving one or two of his limbs behind him as the only trophies of his conquest. Or some angry crab, its shelter invaded, would rudely seize on a finger incautiously thrust into his nippers, and, if resistance were offered, would continue to hold it, vice-like, for half an hour. Not infrequently Hugh would be introduced to the acquaintance of the cuttle-fish and the sea-hare, and would be shown how the one, when pursued by an enemy, discharges a cloud of ink to conceal its retreat; and how the other darkens the water around it with a lovely purple pigment, which Uncle Sandy felt sure would make a rich dye, like that extracted of old by the Tyrians from a whelk which he had often seen on the beach near Alexandria. Swarms of other creatures, still more curious and lovely, but less generally known, exposed their wonders to Hugh's ardent gaze. Indeed, the tract of sea-bottom laid bare by the ebbing tide formed an admirable school, where, under the able and entertaining tutelage of Uncle Sandy, the embryo geologist was learning facts of the highest value to him in his future studies.

A brave and fearless boy, too, was our young naturalist. In the face of the Cromarty cliffs there is a marvellous marble-producing cavern, known as the "Dropping Cave." It moreover bore the reputation of being haunted. A distinguished gentleman visiting the locality, desired to see some specimens of the singular stones formed within by the dropping water. The superstition of the people rendering them afraid to undertake the task of procuring them, the commission was undertaken by Hugh and his uncles, who, provided with torches and hammers, explored the strange and grotesque grotto, and returned laden with mineral treasures. Other caves also, in close neighbourhood with this one, were examined on the same occasion; and on the following day the whole school was thrown into a state of feverish excitement by the account of the expedition and the marvels that had been witnessed. The spirit of adventure thus fired, Hugh infected one of his companions with a strong desire to see these mysterious palaces of nature. Accordingly, early one spring morning, off they started, without acquainting their friends with their destination. The tide had invaded the entrance, but, by feats of climbing and agility, they contrived to enter. Hour after hour passed away in heedless enjoyment; treasures of petrified moss and crystal stalactites

in abundance were collected, and they began to think of returning; but, to their consternation, it was found that the water was flooding the entrance. Egress was impossible, and the tide was still rising. Desperate efforts at escape were made, but all in vain. Evening came on, and deepened into night, and still the waves rolled in and the wind howled ominously. At length, as morning approached, voices were heard, to which they replied by shouts for help. These grateful sounds proceeded from two boats, which had been sent out to search the rocks, and by which the terrified prisoners were mercifully rescued. On reaching Cromarty, a crowd was assembled on the beach to welcome them back. To celebrate the exploit, Hugh composed some verses, which became quite popular; they were read over tea-tables, recited with great applause at boarding-schools, and won for the hero-author numerous patrons.

For the next year or two Master Hugh grew a sad, wild, insubordinate lad, and the only school in which he could be adequately taught was that world-wide one which awaited him, "in which," as he says, "toil and hardship are the severe but noble masters." He got into frequent scrapes and quarrels at school, which procured for Hugh the reputation of being a dangerous person. His scholastic career was brought to an abrupt termination by his contest with a new master. Not comprehending this new pedagogue's way of spelling and pronouncing each syllable separately, he spelt the fatal word "awful" quite through, according to his own fashion. The master proceeded to teach his own method by spelling the word himself: aw, awful, awful. As the northern accent gives to *a* the sound of *au*, Hugh imagined that the master had interposed a superfluous *a* (awaful), and was instructing him to spell it incorrectly. Hugh's presumed contumacy was recompensed with a sharp cut across the ears with the taws. Failing still to comprehend the master, the blow was repeated. Hugh, after this, refusing to spell any more, the pedagogue seized the obstinate culprit and attempted to throw him down. The robust boy, however, was a powerful wrestler, and a match for the master; but, tripping over a form, he fell, and was at the dominie's mercy, who beat him till he was covered with bruises and filled with aching pains. On rising to his feet, he slowly walked off, and thus abruptly terminated his school life.

We have dwelt thus largely upon the incidents of the great geologist's early life, for the purpose of showing how far the circumstances of his lot were favourable or unfavourable to his subsequent success in science and literature. It is clear that he did not owe much of his advancement to what he acquired at school; but the deficiency of his education in this respect was, to a great extent, compensated by his diligent habit of reading, and the eagerness with which he observed and studied the works of God.

#### THE MONTHS IN LONDON.—MARCH.

If we were to draw a phrenological portrait of the month of March, we should endow him with a foul-weather face, fit to confront a sou'-wester, a magnificent organ of self-esteem, and one of combativeness to match; for March is ordinarily a

blustering fellow, boldly asserting himself, and making his way in the world in a noisy, demonstrative, and racketty manner. When he comes in in an agreeable mood—the mood in which we like best to meet him—the first thing he does is to set about undoing the work of February Fillydyke, his predecessor. For this purpose he lets loose his fierce drying winds from north, east, and south alternately, and licks up the ponds and pools, the moist contents of drains and dykes, and the shallow wintry inundations, and, indeed, in a manner wipes the tearful face of Nature dry and clean. He seldom stops here, however, but blows away harder than ever, scattering the clouds clean out of sight, and letting in the cheerful sunshine upon everything, and calling loudly for the coming of spring, the bursting of the buds, and the dappling of the green meads with daisies and daffodils, and the mossy grassy banks with crowds of fresh primroses and full-blown odorous violets. Then, through all the land, March is joyous and glad; and, like a wild urchin let loose for the holidays, begins kicking up a dust, which, notwithstanding that it gets into one's mouth and half blinds one's eyes as we walk the country roads or the city streets, we are all pleased to see; for we know that there is sound truth in the old proverb, "A bushel of March dust is worth a king's ransom;" and that a dry, dusty March is the surest guarantee that kind Nature can offer us for the success of the husbandman's labours, and an abundance at harvest time for both man and beast.

But one cannot be certain of the moods of March. He may choose to come in with his head crowned with snow, and icicles dangling on his beard; he sometimes takes part with winter, and persists in freezing, snowing, and sleeting for the better half of his time; so that one stands as much in need of a cloak and the comforts of the chimney corner under his rule, as under that of hoary old December himself. When this is the case, we need not look for March dust, and may calculate upon a late spring, a partial failure in the summer crops, and an average harvest at the most.

The 1st of March is St. David's day—a day of immemorial honour among Welshmen, of whom there are enough in London to insure its observance, and to bring the desiderated leek in sufficient quantities to market. The practice of wearing the leek in the hat on St. David's day, which formerly obtained among Welshmen, has now almost died out in London, though even yet the custom is observable among the Welsh seamen in the river, and the lower orders of mechanics in the eastern part of the metropolis. Upon the whole, however, the leek is rather eaten than worn by the Welsh dwellers in London in the present day.

It is early in this month that the free forester, as he calls himself, first shows himself in London streets. He deals in the roots of garden flowers, in shrubs, and growing trees; and you meet him in your walks, many times a day, pushing at a hand-cart, loaded heavily with the roots—each imbedded in a solid lump of soil—of primroses, polyanthes, London pride, wall-flowers, southernwood, and a pretty extensive catalogue besides of the commoner sorts of garden-flowers. He drives this heavy merchandise to the suburbs, where his cry of "Fresh roots for the garden!" is well known,

and where, if the season be at all propitious, he will get rid of some hundreds of specimens in the course of the day.

The free forester has a powerful rival in a subject whom, without any injustice, we may call the free squatter. This fraternity invade London in considerable numbers in the month of March, and do not quit the territory till summer is fairly begun. Their advent is always a pleasant event to the dweller in the dusty city, and as welcome as the song of the lark or the circling flight of the swallow. They settle, sometimes singly, sometimes in whole colonies, at the corners of squares, on the kerbs of promenading pavements, and under the shelter of dead walls; and they bring with them all that the free forester lugs about, and a great deal more—dealing not only in flowering roots, but in bulbs, seeds, evergreens, grafts, slips, and shrubs, not to mention young growths from the plantation of every tree that grows in the island, fruit-bearing or other. These men know that a garden, under some modification or other, is a necessity of human existence—that if men, and more especially women, cannot get a garden where plants and flowers will grow and live, they will have one where such things will languish and die, rather than have none at all. They know, therefore, that London is full of gardeners, and, in perfect reliance on the universal gardening propensity and the love of growing flowers, which even the pursuits of mammon cannot eradicate from the human breast, they bring myriads of garden plants to tempt the Londoner, and rarely fail of finding a market for the whole.

The 17th of March is St. Patrick's day—a day which is more to the Irishman in London than St. David's day is to the Welshman. The shamrock, being not by any means so plentiful as the leek, is all the more dearly prized, and on this particular day in the year is worn by demonstrative patriots as a badge of nationality. It is on this saint's day that the pedestrian in London, especially if he happens to be abroad late at night, is apt to be made disagreeably conscious of the enormous numbers of Irishmen, of the lower class, naturalised in London. The flame of their patriotism is so ardent, that it requires to be quenched in a deluge of intoxicating liquors; and the libations not unfrequently kindle another flame, which is not patriotic, but pugnacious, and then broken heads and bruised and battered faces are distributed in honour of St. Patrick, or, more properly, in dishonour of one who was, in his day and generation, a devout servant of God, and who would, had he lived to see them, have warmly protested against the Romish errors which his name has been used to sanction.

The 20th of March commences the season of spring, which is always doubly welcome to the Londoner, who at this crisis is seen marching out into the environs, on early mornings and holidays, to make a prize of any indications of leafage that may come in his way. The favourite spoil are the soft, downy catkins (pussy-cats, as children call them), plucked from the numerous species of osiers and willow-trees abounding in the neighbourhood of the metropolis. These graceful and beautiful blossoms, which always precede the appearance of the leaf, are the "palms" of the com-



mon people, and represent, with them, the green branches carried before the Redeemer on his entry into Jerusalem. Like everything else to which a value is attached, they are made articles of merchandise in London, and are no sooner visible in hedge or forest, than they may be found with equal certainty in Covent-Garden market.

Perhaps the most important day in March to the Londoner is the quarter-day, which, as all the rent-paying world knows but too well, comes on the 25th of the month. It is signalled throughout city and suburbs by the apparition in the streets of huge vans—here drawn up at the house-door, and loading or unloading amidst a litter of straw, coils of rope, and pewter-pots, the household goods of a migrating tenant—here groaning and creaking their slow passage along the thoroughfares, on their route to the new dwelling. An enormous section of the population of mighty London changes its habitat every quarter-day; and a man who is pathetically inclined and fond of "moving spectacles," will find abundant food for observation in all quarters of the great Babylon at this particular juncture. The rich and respectable migrate as well as the poor and unrespected: now one meets with a train of vans, bulky and numerous as those of a travelling menagerie, grinding their way to a mansion in a west-end square; and anon it is poor Widow Stitcher, wheeling her own property in a barrow, laden with her flock bed, bundle of linen, single deal table, a brace of rickety chairs, a basket of crockery, and a tea-kettle, followed by her half-fed, pallid boy, tattered and shoeless, and shouldering a couple of tin sauce-pans and a rusty kitchen poker. Which is the genuine "moving spectacle" of these two extremes, or whether it is to be found somewhere in the extensive table-land which lies between them, we leave to be decided by the pathetic observer above mentioned, merely remarking that the spectacle of a house turned out-of-doors and wandering on wheels in quest of a new refuge, always strikes us as one of the melancholy phases of domestic life.

Towards the end of March, if the weather be at all propitious, London begins already to think of getting out of the smoke, and snatching a sight and a smell of the country. The railways begin to put on extra trains for short trips, and there is a perceptible increase in the sale of return-tickets to places which lie within short and practicable distances. The boats in the river also get up their steam, and invite their bands of music on board; and the "silent highway" begins to grow populous once more, and noisy with the clatter of voices and the dash of paddles—supposing always that March behaves as he ought to behave, and maintains the character of gentleman-usher to the spring season, which is ascribed to him in the almanack. Of course, if he chooses to be surly, and blows nothing but frost and sleety drizzle, as he is too much given to do sometimes, no movement in the recreative direction can take place; and the best thing we can do is to wish him a speedy exit, with a good riddance to him, and a fair field for sunny, showery April.

By the middle, or towards the close of March, the fishing season sets in. The trout begins to rise in the brooks and rivers, and myriads of insects, roused by this time from their hybernating

sleep, fall a prey to his watchfulness. At this time, too, the pike becomes voracious, and affords excellent sport to the angler who has patience to face the cold winds, and await his dashing onslaught upon the living bait. It is now that the fishing-tackle makers enter upon their season of business and profit; they brush up their shops, augment their stock, and in all parts of London assume a showy and brilliant appearance—their windows flashing with all the hues of the rainbow, and a good many more in addition. The numerous angling establishments within reach of the London angler, prepare themselves in March for the reception of their patronising guests, for whom they will have to provide throughout the entire angling season—that is, until autumn has nearly come to a close. Time was when these angling stations were comparatively few, and all were within an hour or two's walk of the City; but the railway, which in our day has brought Brighton nearer to London than Richmond used to be, has added a hundred fresh rivers, brooks, and streams to the hunting-ground of the angler, and is yearly augmenting the list of angling-stations within reach of the metropolitan lovers of the rod and line. Such are the facts of the case; how far the "gentle craft" is fitted as a humane amusement for a loving mind, we leave our readers to decide.

To business men, March comes recommended as a busy month. The London season is at its height, and, though the winter amusements have hardly begun to flag, the spring fashions are already a subject of interest, and merchants, manufacturers, importers, and retailers are all on the alert to anticipate the coming demand. At this season the London artisan is generally in full work, and he works all the more cheerily and heartily for the prospect of the Easter holidays, which are not far off, when Parliament will break off their councils by a week's prorogation, and employers throughout the city will follow their example, by relaxing the yoke of labour for a day or two, and giving their working hands a holiday.

In ancient times March was the first month of the year; and the book of the Rubrick of the Common Prayer still enjoins the year to begin on the 25th of this month—Lady-day having been regarded as the beginning of the ecclesiastical year up to 1752. The confusion of dates occasioned by the difference of two months between the first day of the legal or ecclesiastical and that of the historical year, is still a frequent source of mistake and misunderstanding to the general reader.

#### LOOKING AND LEAPING.

It was a bitterly cold winter's evening, and our little party nestled closer and closer round the blazing fire. No one felt inclined for reading; we all declared we were by far too cozy for that; and all seemed too happy to talk, or felt too much real joy at heart to laugh. So the question was started, as we rubbed our hands before the fire, and gave a pretty little shudder now and then, "What shall we do?" A mixed party of old and young, of both sexes, must necessarily be rather varied in tastes and inclinations, and ours proved no exception; so it was not till some time had elapsed that

we all agreed in one thing, to submit our several plans to the patriarch of our circle, who had hitherto kept aloof from the discussion.

Mr. Simpson smiled at our appeal, and bent his dear old silvered head to listen to our suggestions, as, one by one, they were urged on him by their ardent proposers. At last it was agreed that a game of proverbs should be played, with this improvement, that the proverbs should furnish us matter for useful and entertaining talk rather than for idle questions. Accordingly, proverbs and names were written on slips of card, and the youngest of us, blindfolded, drew them. To our great delight and, in some cases, relief, "Look before you leap" came forth with Mr. Simpson's name. Never shall I forget the venerable old gentleman, as, raising his head, and collecting his thoughts for a minute, he began:—

"My dear young friends, is it strange that Providence has given me this little duty to-night? Truly in my lifetime I have seen many a leap and some few looks. The pleasures of a green memory almost repay the other disadvantages of age, and make one bless God for being one of his sheaves near harvest-time. Let us look into the subject a little"—mentally, I suppose, for our expositor took off his spectacles:—"it seems to divide mankind into three classes—those who continually look and never leap; those who leap and never look; and the few who look well and often *before* they leap.

"He who leaps before he looks often involuntarily looks back *after*, and then, just in time to be too late, sees his own folly and feels its effects. The rash and inconsiderate, if they have any feelings at all, are always habitual and, what is worse, useless penitents. The die is cast; they have taken an irrevocable step, and that without thought. It is a sad sight to see a man grieving without hope for an event which a momentary glance beforehand might have obviated.

"Equally bad is the part of those who are for ever looking, but never leaping. Going to perform some tremendous feat, thinking on some unheard-of exploit, they spend life, like Johnson's famous character, 'fearing to go forward lest he should go wrong.' Alas, for the instability and indecision of human nature! Leaping in this life, my friends, is quite as necessary as looking; we must

"Act in the living present;  
Heart within, and God o'erhead."

Death will at last surprise these do-nothings, and then they will see how worthless an existence of mere looking is. They have been the world's lumber, useless to themselves, and a stumbling-block to other people's way."

"But the third set, Mr. Simpson? don't be so dismal, please."

"Well, the third set certainly does brighten the picture, which makes my regret the deeper that there are not more of them. The man who looks carefully, deliberately, and, above all, conscientiously before he leaps, will preserve himself from numerous troubles, and will afford a valuable example to the world around him. I do not refer to a mere worldly-wise glance about him, but to the habit of weighing his future actions by the only standard of right—God's revealed will. That

man who ponders the influence, for good or evil, of his doings, and invokes his Maker's blessing upon them, will spend a happy life; and when called to take a solemn look at the dread leap of death before him—when preparing earnestly and prayerfully for the great change that is ever impending, guided by God's good Spirit, he cannot but experience a safe and happy transition into the eternal world.

"Our proverb recommends a medium course between rashness and over-caution. It pictures neither the character of the man who rushes at a chasm, and desperately flings himself over or down it; nor yet him who swings his body to and fro on the brink, who ponders and intends, intends and ponders, till the curtain of night falls, and he finds himself not an inch nearer his destination than he was at sunrise; but it pictures the man who looks thoughtfully, measures distance and force, and leaps with brave heart and steady eye.

"Remember, my friends, the leaping; but above all things, never forget the looking."

#### A BRITISH AMBASSADOR'S INTERVIEW WITH THE SHAH OF PERSIA.

At a time when Persia occupies the attention of the political world, the following narrative by Sir Robert Kerr Porter will be found interesting. We transfer it from a work by the late Dr. Kitto, which will be found of peculiar interest at the present moment.\*

"The palace showed a spacious arena, shaded with trees and intersected by water. In the centre stood the splendid edifice, where his majesty was to sit to receive the homage of his subjects. We were led towards the southern aspect of this place, the grand saloon fronting that way, where the ceremony of royal presentation was to be performed, and were carefully stationed at the point deemed best for seeing and hearing the great king. Before his majesty appeared, I had time to observe the disposition of the scene in which this illustrious personage was to act so conspicuous a part.

"Rows of high poplars and of other trees divide this immense court, or rather garden, into several avenues. That which runs along the midst of the garden is the widest, inclosing a narrow piece of still water, stretching from end to end, and animated here and there with a few little *jets d'eau*, the margins of which were spread with oranges, pears, apples, grapes, and dried fruit, all heaped on plates, set close together like a chain. Another slip of water faced diagonally the front of the palace, and its fountains being more direct in the view of the monarch, were of a greater magnificence and power, shooting up to a height of three or four feet—a sublimity of hydraulic art which the Persians suppose cannot be equalled in any other country. Along the marble edges of the canal and fountains were also placed fruits of every description, in pyramids; and between each elevated range of plates, with these their glowing contents, stood vases filled with flowers, of a beautiful fabric, in wax, that seemed to want nothing of nature but its perfume. In a line, beyond these, was set a regular row of the finest china bowls, filled with sherbet. In the parallel files, down the sides of the wide central avenue, stood the khans and other Persians of rank, arrayed in their most costly attire, of gold and silver brocade, some of

\* See "The Court and People of Persia"—two of the Series of Monthly Volumes published by the Religious Tract Society.

them wearing in addition the royal *kheilat*, which usually consists of a pelisse lined with fine furs, and covered with the richest embroidery, their heads bound with cashmere shawls of every colour and value.

"The royal procession made its appearance. First, the elder sons of the king entered, at the side on which we stood, Abbas Meerza taking the left of the whole, which brought him to the right of the throne. His brothers followed, till they nearly closed upon us. Directly opposite to this elder rank of princes, all grown to manhood, their younger brothers arranged themselves on the other side of the transverse water. They were all superbly habited in the richest brocade vests and shawl-girdles, from the folds of which glittered the jewelled hilts of their daggers. Each wore a robe of gold stuff, lined and deeply collared with the most delicate sables, falling a little below the shoulder, and reaching to the calf of their leg. Around their black caps they also had wound the finest shawls. Every one of them, from the eldest to the youngest, wore bracelets of the most brilliant rubies and emeralds just above the bend of the elbow.

"At some distance, near the front of the palace, appeared another range of highly revered personages—mollahs, astrologers, and other sages of this land of the east, clothed in their more sombre garments of religion and philosophy. There was no noise, no bustle of any kind; every person standing quietly in his place, awaiting the arrival of the monarch. At last, the sudden discharge of the swivels from the camel corps without, with the clang of trumpets, and I know not what congregation of uproarious sounds besides, announced that his majesty had entered the gate of the citadel. But the most extraordinary part of the clamour was the appalling roar of two huge elephants, trained for the express purpose of giving this note of the especial movements of the great king.

"He entered the saloon from the left, and advanced to the front of it, with an air and step which belonged entirely to a sovereign. I never before had beheld anything like such perfect majesty; and he seated himself on his throne with the same indescribable, unaffected dignity. Had there been any assumption in his manner, I could not have been so impressed. He was one blaze of jewels, which dazzled the sight on first looking at him; but the details of his dress were these:—A lofty tiara of three elevations was on his head, which shape appears to have been long peculiar to the crown of the great king. It was entirely composed of thickly set diamonds, pearls, rubies, and emeralds, so exquisitely disposed as to form a mixture of the most beautiful colours in the brilliant light reflected from its surface. Several black feathers, like the heron plume, were intermixed with the resplendent aigrettes of this truly imperial diadem, whose bending points were finished with pear-formed pearls of an immense size. The vesture was of gold tissue, nearly covered with a similar disposition of jewellery; and crossing the shoulders were two strings of pearls, probably the largest in the world. I call his dress a vesture, because it sat close to his person, from the neck to the bottom of the waist, showing a shape as noble as his air. At that point it devolved downwards in loose drapery, like the usual Persian garment, and was of the same costly materials with the vest. But for splendour, nothing could exceed the broad bracelet round his arms, and the belt which encircled his waist; they actually blazed like fire, when the rays of the sun met them; and when we know the names derived from such excessive lustre, we cannot be surprised at seeing such an effect. The jewelled band on the right arm was called 'the mountain of light,' and that on the left 'the sea of light.'

"The throne was of pure white marble, raised a

few steps from the ground, and carpeted with shawls and cloth of gold, on which the king sat in the fashion of his country, his back supported by a large cushion. While the great king was approaching his throne, the whole assembly continued bowing their heads to the ground, till he had taken his place. A dead silence then ensued. In the midst of this solemn stillness, while all eyes were fixed on the bright object before them, a sort of volley of words, bursting at one impulse from the mouths of the mollahs and astrologers, made me start, and interrupted my gaze. This strange oratory was a kind of heraldic enumeration of the great king's titles, dominions, and glorious acts, with an appropriate panegyric on his courage, liberality, and extended power. When this was ended, all heads still bowing to the ground, and the air had ceased to vibrate with the sounds, there was a pause for about half a minute, and then his majesty spoke. The effect was even more startling than the sudden bursting forth of the mollahs; for this was like a voice from the tombs—so deep, so hollow, and at the same time so penetratingly loud. Having thus addressed his people, he looked towards the British *chargé d'affaires*, with whom I stood, and then we moved forward to the front of the throne. The same awful voice, though in a lowered tone, spoke to him, and honoured me with a gracious welcome to his dominions. After his majesty had put a few questions to me, and received my answers, we fell back in our places, and were instantly served with bowls of a most delicious sherbet, which very grateful refreshment was followed by an attendant presenting to us a large silver tray, on which lay a heap of small coin, called a *shy*, of the same metal, mixed with a few pieces of gold. I imitated my friend in all these ceremonies, and held out both my hands to be filled with the royal largess, which, with no little difficulty, we passed through our festal trappings into our pockets.

"When the rest of the gratulatory compliments of the day had been uttered between the monarch and his assembled nobles, the chief executioner, our former herald, gave us the signal that all was over for that morning. We then retired, as we came, under his auspices, but, if possible, with still more pressure and heat than we had battled through on our approach."

Here the thought occurs, that if frail human glory—the glory of a man that shall die, arrayed in vestures wrought by man's toil—can thus strike and overpower the sense, what must it be to witness "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ?" It was, doubtless, the consciousness of the strong impression which even human glory may make, which caused the ancient belief that no man could look upon the Divine glory, and yet live. So when, in the year that king Uzziah died, the prophet "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up," and heard the hovering seraphim cry one unto another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory!" he at once cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." But when a seraph had touched his lips with a living coal from the altar, and said, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged," he beheld that glorious vision undisturbed. So shall all who believe the Gospel, redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb of God, and sanctified by the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit, behold, with undazzled and admiring eye, that unutterable glory in which our Lord abides, and in which he shall reappear—that glory, a mere glimpse of which struck the persecuting Saul, on his way to Damascus, blinded to the ground.

